

**Amendment and Response**

Applicant: Jack L. Meador

Serial No.: 10/612,598

Filed: July 2, 2003

Docket No.: H302.302.101

Title: SYSTEM AND METHOD FOR PREVENTING COMPREHENSION OF A PRINTED DOCUMENT

**IN THE CLAIMS**

Please cancel claims 2, 5, 7-8, 11-12, 16-18, and 21-25.

Please add claims 28-31.

Please amend claims 1, 3-4, 6, 9-10, 13-15, 19-20, and 26-27 as follows:

1. (Currently Amended) A method of preventing comprehension of a printed document, the method comprising:

feeding a printed document into a device having a printing mechanism;

printing, ~~with~~via the printing mechanism, at least one obfuscation pattern onto ~~over~~ at least a portion of the printed document to prevent comprehension of the printed document;

shredding the printed document after printing the at least one obfuscation pattern onto the printed document; and

preventing reconstruction of the shredded printed document via the at least one obfuscation pattern.

2. (Canceled)

3. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1 and further comprising:

scanning the printed document prior to printing the at least one obfuscation pattern onto~~over~~ the printed document to produce at least one of an image file ~~or~~and an electronic text file of the printed document; and

identifying, based upon the at least one image file ~~or~~and electronic text file, at least one target portion of the printed document at which ~~portion of the printed document contains~~ information to be obscured the at least one obfuscation pattern is printed; and

directing printing at least one ink and toner to the printed document to obfuscate the identified information of the printed document.

4. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 3 wherein directing printing the at least one target portion at which the at least one obfuscation pattern of the at least one ink and toner is printed comprises:

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Title: SYSTEM AND METHOD FOR PREVENTING COMPREHENSION OF A PRINTED DOCUMENT

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~~directing printing to at least one of only at least one~~ whitespace portion of the printed document;

~~— a text portion of the printed document; and~~

~~— a graphics portion of the printed document.~~

5. (Canceled)

6. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 3 ~~and further comprising:~~  
wherein identifying the at least one target portion of the printed document comprises  
determining, based upon the image file, a first text pattern of symbols in the printed  
document, the first pattern of symbols including a line spacing, a paragraph spacing, and a  
margin spacing of the printed document, wherein the symbols of the first pattern include at  
least one of characters or numerals; and

wherein printing the at least one obfuscation pattern comprises:

building the at least one obfuscation pattern as a second pattern of symbols  
with each symbol of the second pattern selected to correspond, configured to surround  
to one or more symbols ~~—~~ of the first pattern of symbols, to obfuscate/prevent  
comprehension of the first pattern of symbols of the printed document, wherein the  
second pattern of symbols is configured to occupy the line spacing between adjacent  
lines of the first pattern of symbols, to occupy the paragraph spacing between adjacent  
paragraphs of the first pattern of symbols, and to occupy the margin spacing of the  
first pattern of symbols; and

printing the second pattern of symbols on the printed document relative to the  
first pattern of symbols ~~on the printed document~~ to prevent comprehension of the ~~at~~  
~~least one portion of the printed document.~~

7-8. (Canceled)

9. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 3 wherein the at least one target portion of  
the printed document comprises a white space portion of the printed document and ~~directing~~

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Title: SYSTEM AND METHOD FOR PREVENTING COMPREHENSION OF A PRINTED DOCUMENT

---

printing the at least one obfuscation pattern at the at least one target portion comprises at least one of:

using at least one of following steps before shredding the printed document:

printing characters randomly in a white space portion of the printed document;

randomly selecting characters and printing the selected characters as overstrikes on characters of the printed document;

selecting a character that complementarily obscures an identified character of the printed document and printing the selected character as an overstrike onto the identified character of the printed document;

selecting a negative image of ~~an~~ at least one identified character of the printed document and printing the negative image about the at least one identified character of the printed document to produce a substantially uniform thickness of ink or toner for the combination of the at least one identified character and the negative image of the at least one identified character on the printed document, wherein the whitespace portion comprises an area surrounding the at least one identified character and defined by the printed negative image of the identified character;

randomly selecting characters and printing strings of the selected characters at randomly selected angles on the printed document; and

randomly selecting characters and printing the selected characters individually at angles rotated relative to existing characters of the printed document.

10. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1, ~~comprising wherein~~ printing the at least one obfuscation pattern as over the printed document further comprises:

~~directing printing at least one of ink and toner in~~ at least one of:

a random pattern of individual pixels; and

a random pattern of pixel clusters with each pixel cluster having at least one of a randomly selected shape, a random selected color, a randomly selected intensity, a randomly selected size, a randomly selected location on the printed document, including driving the random pattern with at least one of a linear geometric function, a non-linear geometric function, a repeating function, and a non-repeating function.

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Title: SYSTEM AND METHOD FOR PREVENTING COMPREHENSION OF A PRINTED DOCUMENT

---

11-12. (Canceled)

13. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 3, comprising:

analyzing the electronic text file to determine a content of the printed document,  
wherein the at least one target portion of the printed document comprises at least one  
whitespace portion of the printed document and printing the at least one obfuscation pattern  
comprises at least one of:

randomly selecting a plurality of content-free words and printing the selected words in  
a non-grammatical order as the at least one obfuscation pattern in the at least one whitespace  
portion of the printed document with the selected words printed in at least one of a repeating  
pattern and a non-repeating pattern; and

selecting a plurality of content-free words and printing the selected words in a  
grammatical order as the at least one obfuscation pattern in at least one whitespace portion of  
the printed document;

~~selecting at least one character and printing the at least one character as an overstrike~~  
~~on top of an identified character in a word of the printed document; and~~

~~printing a block of the at least one ink and toner over at least one of a selected~~  
~~character, a selected word, a selected phrase, a selected line of text, and a selected paragraph.~~

14. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 3 wherein identifying the at least one  
target portion comprises:

identifying from the image file at least one graphic portion of the printed document as  
the at least one target portion and selecting at least one of:

~~a blocking pattern including at least one of an irregular shaped blot-out pattern, a grid~~  
~~pattern, a cross-hatching pattern; and~~

a graphic manipulation pattern configured to use a modified duplicate of the at least  
one graphic portion as the at least one obfuscation pattern, the graphic manipulation pattern  
including at least one of mirror image of the at least one graphic portion, a complementary  
image of the at least one graphic portion, a rotated image of the at least one graphic portion, a

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Title: SYSTEM AND METHOD FOR PREVENTING COMPREHENSION OF A PRINTED DOCUMENT

---

negative image of the at least one graphic portion, and a scrambled image of the at least one graphic portion.

15. (Currently Amended) A document obfuscator system comprising:
- a printing mechanism configured to print ~~at least one of an ink and a toner~~ on a paper document;
  - a scanner configured for obtaining an image file of the printed document and including an optical character recognition module configured for converting the image file into an electronic text file;
  - a memory ~~storing~~ an obfuscation module ~~stored in a memory and~~ configured to cause the printing mechanism to print ~~at least one over-printing pattern the at least one ink and toner over at least a portion of~~ on a printed document to obfuscate ~~the at least a portion of~~ the printed document, wherein the obfuscation module comprises:
    - a page analyzer configured for identifying a content of the electronic text file of printed document; and
    - an overprint response selector configured for selecting the at least one over-printing pattern dependent on the content of the printed document, to obfuscate the content of the printed document; and
    - a shredder configured to shred the obfuscated printed document.

16-18. (Canceled)

19. (Currently Amended) The document obfuscator system of claim 15 wherein an array of symbols and patterns is stored in the memory and configured for selection by the obfuscation module for printing over the printed document.
20. (Currently Amended) The document obfuscator system of claim ~~18~~ 15 wherein ~~the printed document comprises at least one whitespace portion and at least one text portion, with the overprint response selector comprising~~ a plurality of activatable manipulators including at least one of:

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Title: SYSTEM AND METHOD FOR PREVENTING COMPREHENSION OF A PRINTED DOCUMENT

---

~~a pattern manipulator configured for selecting a second pattern of symbol  
misinformation that confuses a first pattern of symbols of the printed document;~~

a character manipulator configured for selecting a plurality of characters for  
overprinting onto the at least one ~~of a~~ whitespace portion and an the at least one text portion  
character of the printed document;

a word manipulator configured for selecting a plurality of words, blackouts, and  
~~overstrike~~ characters for overprinting onto the at least one ~~of a~~ whitespace portion and the at  
least one text portion, ~~a word, a phrase, a line, a paragraph~~ to obfuscate ~~obscure~~ natural  
language word groupings of the printed document;

a pixel manipulator configured for selecting at least one of a plurality of individual  
pixels and a plurality of pixel clusters for overprinting onto the printed document; and

~~an image manipulator configured for selecting at least one of a blackout pattern and a  
confusing image pattern for overprinting onto a graphic of the printed document to obfuscate  
the printed document.~~

21-25. (Canceled)

26. (Currently Amended) A computer readable medium having computer-executable  
instructions for performing a method of obfuscating a printed document, the method  
comprising:

identifying at least one whitespace portion, at least one text portion, and at least one  
graphics portion of a printed document ~~to be obscured~~; and

manipulating at least one of a symbol pattern, a character pattern, a word pattern, a  
random pixel pattern, and an image pattern configured for over-printing onto ~~at least one of~~  
the respective a whitespace portion, a the text portion, and the a graphics portion of the printed  
document to obfuscate the identified portion of prevent reconstruction of the over-printed  
document after shredding of the over-printed document.

27. (Currently Amended) The medium of claim 26 wherein:

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Title: SYSTEM AND METHOD FOR PREVENTING COMPREHENSION OF A PRINTED DOCUMENT

---

manipulating ~~a~~the symbol pattern includes selecting a second pattern of symbol misinformation that confuses a first pattern of symbols of the printed document;

manipulating ~~a~~the character pattern includes selecting a plurality of characters for overprinting onto the at least one ~~of the~~ whitespace portion and ~~the~~an at least one character of text portion of the printed document;

manipulating ~~a~~the word pattern includes selecting a plurality of words, blackouts, and overstrike characters for overprinting onto the at least one ~~of the~~ whitespace portion, ~~a word of and the at least one~~ text portion, ~~a phrase of the text portion, a line of the text portion, a paragraph of the text portion to obscure~~obfuscate natural language word groupings of the text portion of the printed document;

manipulating ~~the~~a pixel pattern includes selecting at least one of a plurality of individual pixels and a plurality of pixel clusters for overprinting onto the printed document; and

manipulating ~~the~~a image pattern includes selecting at least one of a blackout pattern and a confusing image pattern for overprinting onto the at least one graphic portion of the printed document to obfuscate the printed document.

28. (New) The method of claim 1 wherein printing the at least one obfuscation pattern comprises printing the at least one obfuscation pattern over at least one graphics portion of the printed document.

29. (New) The method of claim 1 wherein printing the obfuscation pattern comprises printing at least one character that complementarily obscures an identified character of the printed document and printing the at least one character as an overstrike onto the identified character of the printed document.

30. (New) The method of claim 1 wherein the at least one obfuscation pattern comprises two or more different obfuscation patterns.

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31. (New) The document obfuscator system of claim 15 wherein the printed document comprises at least one graphics portion and wherein the overprint response selector comprises:

an image manipulator configured for selecting a confusing image pattern for overprinting onto the at least one graphics portion of the printed document to obfuscate the printed document.